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Hermetic Tradition: The Silver Key

The Taro

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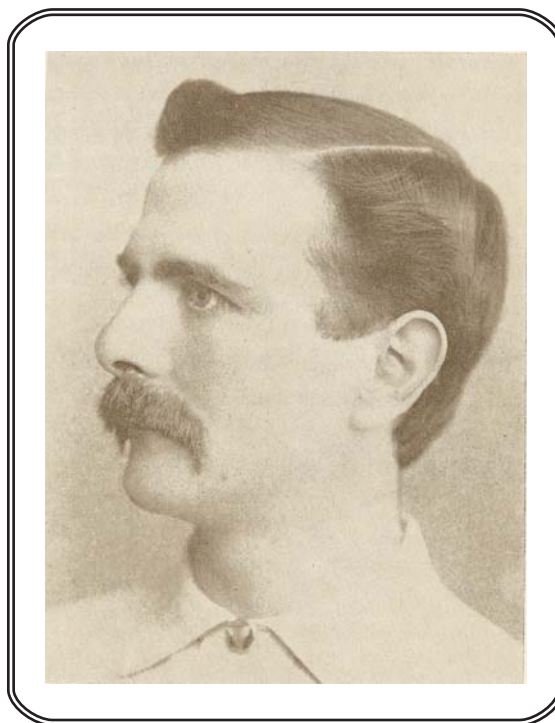
With this Volume of the Quarterly our series on the Tarot concludes. As a member of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, T. H. Burgoyne is credited with bringing the B of L tradition to America where Elbert Benjamine took it to the next level of development.

Part 1 of 5: The Platonist, Vol. III, No. 7, July, 1887

Editors Note: *To preserve Burgoyne's speech patterns attempts to impose contemporary usage standards on his writing were not imposed.*

Considering the great number of books published within the last twelve years upon the various aspects of Theosophy and Occultism it is somewhat astonishing to find that not a single work bearing upon the TARO has appeared.

This fact is all the more remarkable when we consider that actual initiates who have been admitted within the sacred sanctuary of the Occult, and 'read' the mysteries concealed behind the veil of the temple, know the priceless value of the arcane system and yet have not spoken. *Why this profound silence?* An impartial consideration of the greater portion of the mystical literature furnished within the period above referred to must convince any unbiased student that it contains but little of those primary elements from which the *Bread of spiritual life* is produced. Probably the only works of real intrinsic value are the old



books which have been translated into our native tongue and re-published. That these old works should so far exceed in value those of modern writers is also a matter of astonishment, and the true "reason why" can only be explained upon the hypothesis that our old philosophers knew of that concerning which they wrote, while our modern authors know very little, and in all probability give but very distorted images of that little which they do understand.

We however possess one thing which our ancient and medieval brethren did not,—namely the satisfaction of seeing our literary idols appears before the world in their cloth and gold, "specially made paper" and bindings of "unique style." But this affords but little satisfaction to the earnest seeker for truth, and we can only comfort ourselves by reflecting upon the wise words of Starry Solomon who said "*there is*

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nothing new under the sun.” This we all concede, making an exception only in favor of a mass of word juggling literature, the special product of the latter portion of the nineteenth century, which may be made to mean anything, everything and consequently nothing.

With this brief digression from the subject of our article we resume.

The TARO, which really means ROTA or WHEEL OF DESTINY, and at the same time the circle of necessity, is an elaborate system of divination in one of its aspects, and a process of mental and spiritual evolution in another. Further, when considered as a means of evolving the latent defici- attributes of the human soul in the western race, it is as superior to the metaphysical formulas of Patanjali as the daylight is superior to darkness for the mundane requirements of embodied humanity.¹

The honest reader will not estimate the Taro as an ingenious device for divination in the fortune telling sense; such an estimate would debase the Taro as well as the student.

The higher and more useful purpose of the Taro is, to correlate the fragmentary truths which are ever and anon floating before the interior sense like will-of-the-wisps in the evening twilight, and wed them into a true harmonious alliance with the inner selfhood, and thus form a consistent whole.

The TARO when broadly considered is a perfected science of correspondences in the most absolute sense, and consequently is equally applicable to the three great planes of manifested being, namely, the Material, the Astral and the Spiritual, the action and inter-action of which comprise the *all* of visible and invisible creation, and in its practical application is either Kabbalistical, Astrological, or Universal, according to the plane of contemplation and in-

quiry,—therefore, it is impossible for any subject to arise upon which the Taro cannot be consulted with satisfaction and profit to the earnest student of nature’s hidden mysteries.

The ancient sages divided the perfect panoramic picture of the Taro,² into a number of tablets solely as a means of convenience and practical utility in the presentation of truth upon either one of the three great planes above mentioned. They made the symbolical hieroglyphics of each tablet or card correspond in its symbolism to the esoteric significance and meaning of one page or leaf of the sacred book of Enoch, the perfect man, who occupies the point of Equilibrium in the celestial sphere. The first set of tablets contains 56 cards, and the 22 keys, or 78 in all, and applies solely and purely to the first of the three great planes, viz. the material. It must be here noted that many otherwise profound students of the Taro make a very serious error in this respect, and teach that this exoteric set of cards can be used upon any plane,—only upholding the requirement of three separate sets by asserting that “three sets of the same cards should be used” keeping one set for each plane. This is absolutely erroneous, and is liable to lead many thoughtful people astray.

There are three separate sets of tablets, the Exoteric only of which is known to the public. The second is the Astral, and contains but 22 tablets. The third is the Spiritual, and contains exactly 8 symbols of which the eighth is but the octave repetition of the first. At this point we must digress because those readers who are unacquainted with our subject, or who at the best are but imperfectly acquainted therewith, may ask: what is this Taro, after all, of what does it consist, and wherein are the truths, the correspondences and sublime mysteries of which you speak? Have patience, reader, and in our next we will make you better acquainted with this sublime system of the ancients.

Piece 2 of 5: *The Platonist*, Vol. III, No. 9, Sept., 1887

CHAPTER 1.

As stated in our introduction, the science of the Taro in its *practical application* is divided by nature into three *distinct* sections, departments, planes and *states*. The most *external* and consequently the most easily comprehended, is that which in its interpretation is purely Kabbalistical.

It is to this section that we shall, for the present, confine our attention, our greatest object being to make the general laws and actual *working principles* perfectly clear to our readers. When we wish to learn some foreign language, we all know, that to be able to read it we must first make ourselves perfectly familiar with its alphabet, and *learn the value, sound and symbol* of each particular letter. The indulgent reader will not, therefore, be surprised when he learns that he must follow out *exactly the same process* if he desires to become a successful scholar in his study of the esoteric language of

the Taro. For this sublime philosophical system is indeed a language, the alphabet of which consists of mystical hieroglyphics, whose *values* are expressed by *numbers*, whose *sounds* are the *harmonies* of nature, and whose *characters* are the *symbols* of the Kosmos.

With these explanatory remarks we will now briefly tabulate the first elementary facts to be remembered:

- I. This division of the Taro contains 78 tablets or cards having their own appropriate characters and symbols.
- II. These correspond as far as they go with the 52 contained in a pack of ordinary playing cards.
- III. There is, however, this difference, viz.: The Taro contains one extra card to each of the four suits, called the Chevalier or Knight, thus making the total number

of ordinary cards 56 instead of 52. In addition to these 56 tablets, there are 22 *special cards* or keys as they are termed. These keys constitute, with the four aces, the quintessence of the system; they are the alphabet from which the prophetic language is constructed.

- IV. The four suits and their correspondence with the common cards are as follows:³ CUPS (*hearts*), DENIERS (*diamonds*), SWORDS (*spades*), and CLUBS (*clubs*). Further, each suit consists of 14 cards, from the ace to the 10, and the *four* court cards, viz.: King, Queen, Chevalier, and Knave. This is also the order of their relation, power, and value.

The alphabet of this Kabbalistic system is exactly the same as the one used by the *Hebrews*, and consists of 22 letters. Each letter claims dominion over and is represented by one of the 22 keys, above mentioned. The value or power, and their symbolic significance, are as follows.

THE FIRST KEY: the letter *Aleph*.

The first Key is represented by the Magician, the figure of the Sage—the perfect man. The letter Aleph is the *To be*, the *I am*, the first matter, the producer of numbers. It comprises the Alpha of all things, and represents the state from which emanates the infinitude of possibilities. It is wisdom, the first divine emanation of the *En Soph*, and signifies—in the *intellectual world*—the unity, principle and composition of numbers, the absolute will principle of all actions. In the *physical world*: the man, the most high place of *relative beings*, called upon to *exalt* himself by a perpetual expansion of the faculties in the concentric spheres of the absolute.

THE SECOND KEY: the letter *Beth*.

The second Key is represented by the Virgin, the Isis of the Egyptians, and symbolises the sanctuary, the Binary, the law, the Occult Hierarchy or church. It is the *formative, re-productive* possibilities of the *To be*. It is Love, the second divine emanation of the *En Soph*, and signifies—in the *intellectual world*—the Binary, reflection of the unity of Science, perception of the visible and invisible. In the *physical world*: the woman, matrix of the man, uniting herself with him in order to accomplish equal destiny.

THE THIRD KEY: the letter *Ghimel*.

The third Key is represented by the Empress. It is the emblem of the *Ternary* (trinity) and of Fecundity: it is the symbol of visible and corporeal nature, and of infancy. It is analogous to the *woman clothed with the sun* in the Revelations of St. John, and of Venus, the Aphrodite of the Greeks. It also represents the supreme power balanced by the intuition; it is *love* as manifested in man, and signifies—in the *intellectual world*—the fecundity of universal being, and the *processes* of spontaneous generation. In the *physical*

world: Nature in its work, the germination of the *acts* which are formed to develop from the will

THE FOURTH KEY: the letter *Daleth*.

The fourth Key is represented by a Sovereign, the *Emperor*. It is the hieroglyphic of power, and of the quaternary of symbolism, of the law, of Philosophy, of the practical realization of the word. It is the emblem of initiation and of power; it is the T, *tau* or *scepter* of *power* among the Egyptians, and the Magic Wand of the Magician, and signifies—in the *intellectual world*—the realization of the *subjective idea*, the quadruple labour of the interior spirit. In the *physical world*: The realization of the acts directed by science and truth, the *love* of justice, the power of the will, and the work of all human organs and functions.

THE FIFTH KEY: the letter *He*.

The fifth Key is represented by a figure of the Hierophant. It is the general initiator of the adept, and is the emblem of *demonstration* in occult ceremonies and religious matters. It is the sign of omnipotence and of autocratic intellectual power: it is the Signata, the sign of the word made flesh. This key is the star of the Magi, the mountain of Light. It is the symbol of justice, goodness, order, and lastly of the Microcosm, and in its interpretation, signifies—in the *intellectual world*—religion, intercourse with the absolute being and relative being, the Infinite with the Finite, the-at-one-ment. In the *physical world*: Inspirations communicated by the vibrations of the Astral light, the ordeal of man by the liberty of action in the immutable circle of universal law.

THE SIXTH KEY: the letter *Vau*.

The sixth Key is represented by a youth between two females, who represent respectively *Vice* and *Virtue*, and is known to the students of this art as the *lover*. It is the sign alike of toil and liberty, the emblem of the struggle, of combinations and equilibrium, of *unity under two modes of action*, and therefore of *duality*. It is also the symbol of antagonism, the *denial* and the affirmation of two equal forces, and signifies—in the *intellectual world*—the balance of liberty and bondage of Freedom, and the law of Inevitable necessity. In the *physical world*: the antagonism of the forces of nature, and consequent chain of effects with their causes. Briefly, it is the emblem of *cause and effect*.

THE SEVENTH KEY: the letter *Dzain*.

The seventh Key is represented by a War Chariot of *square form* surrounded by a starry canopy, containing the conqueror. It is the hieroglyphic of the sacred septenary of Royalty, containing the *secrets* of “the divine right of kings to govern.” It is the sign of the higher Priesthood, of Triumph, and of true *results* obtained by *struggle*. It is the symbol of

the supremacy of mind over matter, and of the subserviency of blind Force to intelligence. It signifies—in *the intellectual world*—the priesthood and scientists of the empire, the intellectual circles of mankind. *In the physical world*: the submission of the elements, the mobile plastic nature of

matter yielding to the mechanical skill and intelligence of man.

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THE EIGHTH KEY: the letter *Cheth*.

The eighth key is symbolised by a woman seated upon a throne. Her breasts are girdled by a string of pearls, the rosary, and upon her head she wears a crown of iron lances. She holds in the right hand a sword, the point elevated, and in her left a balance. This is the symbol of absolute justice, and signifies justice in its equilibrium: it is the sign of realization and of that which comes by revelation. It is likewise the sidereal light or astral spirit of which Paracelsus speaks, and when viewed from its occult plane signifies—in the intellectual world—attraction and repulsion. In the physical world: relative justice, fallible and limited, which emanates from men.

THE NINTH KEY: the letter *Teth*.

The ninth key is symbolised by the Hermit. Broadly considered it is the symbol of Initiation, for herein, we behold the sage wrapped in an ample cloak, to shield him from the contaminating influences in the world of matter. It is the spiritual garment of the soul which protects the wearer from the power of the world and enables him to rest calmly in the midst of its follies, and he carries the staff, the magic wand, to guide his footsteps, in his right hand; and a lamp, the light of the soul, in his left, wherewith to light up the mysteries of the past, present, and future.⁴ This symbol contains the absolute of the mysteries, and signifies—in the intellectual world—prudence, care, material wisdom, and the director of the will. In the physical world: circumspection, reflection, thoughtful study, and the guide to actions.

THE TENTH KEY: the letter *Jod*.

The tenth key is the symbolical number of the Kabbalah, and is represented by the wheel of Fortune, upon the external rim of which are figured the fish, the rabbit, and the monkey. It is the symbol of the Phallus, and pertains unto all the rites and ceremonies which carry out the symbolism of the sexual idea. It is the Rota or Taro of Hermetic science, and the Chakra of Hindu philosophy. It is the Kosmic wheel of Ezekiel, and the key of universal kingdom and signifies—in *the intellectual world*—the authority of a ruler. *In the physical world*: Good and evil fortune—luck.

THE ELEVENTH KEY: the letter *Kaph*.

The eleventh key is represented by a young female who closes with her hand without any effort the jaws of a Lion.

This key symbolises the power of the Human over the animal planes, and shows the superiority of calm dignity and cultured intelligence over savage instinctive force. This emblem is feminine, and when considered, signifies—in *the intellectual world*—moral and cultured force. *In the physical world*: the organic forces of humanity.

THE TWELFTH KEY: the letter *Lamed*.

The twelfth key is symbolised by a man suspended or hung up by one leg from a tree. It is the emblem of punishment, of just retribution for treasonable crimes, of suffering the consequences of sin. In another aspect it is Prometheus bound and undergoing torment for his inglorious crime against the majesty of Divinity, and shows the justice meted out to all who reveal the sacred mysteries of nature imparted under the solemn oaths of initiation. Judas Iscariot, is here represented by reason of the betrayal of his master. This hieroglyphic signifies—in *the intellectual world*—the precept of loyal duty. *In the physical world*: sacrifice and faithful obedience to the conscience.

THE THIRTEENTH KEY: the letter *Mem*.

The thirteenth key is represented by death in the form of a skeleton mowing down bodies with a scyth in a pasture, where men are growing like vegetation. This key is the symbol of necromancy, the black art, and death. For the initiate it is the sign of compensation: to the vulgar it is a terror, and a spectre of untold calamity. Here in this hieroglyphic life and death meet face to face: it is a glorious sign upon the higher planes as it means the transformation of the material into the immaterial, the visible body into the invisible soul, and signifies—in *the intellectual world*—the ascension of the purified spirit to the divine spheres. *In the physical world*: natural death, and the grave, the final end of all mundane things.

THE FOURTEENTH KEY: the letter *Nun*.

The fourteenth key is represented by an angel with snow white wings, and the sign of the sun upon her forehead. Upon her bosom she bears the signs of the triangle and square. She is pouring out from one jug into another two essences, which when combined form the elixir of life. This key is the symbol of the two primal combinations positive and negative, male and female, which rule and dominate all the kingdoms of the world. It is the universal solvent which

transmutes the base metals into shining gold, and signifies—in the intellectual world—the combinations of ideas which form the moral life of man. *In the physical world*: the combination of the dual forces of nature.

THE FIFTEENTH KEY: the letter Samech.

The fifteenth key is represented by a figure of the Devil with hoofs, horns and tail complete. Upon each side of his Satanic majesty stands an imp ready to obey the infernal thought of his diabolical master. It is the hieroglyphic of black magic, and indicates the infernal means wherewith the black magi deceive the people. It is the goat of Mendes, and is the true emblem of false prophets and false teachers, and signifies—in the intellectual world—the mysteries of magic, and the realm of the elementaries of nature. *In the physical world*: unforeseen fatalities, natural calamities and convulsions of nature; also occult phenomena upon the material plane.

THE SIXTEENTH KEY: the letter Gmaliel.

The sixteenth key is represented by men falling from a high tower in which there is an explosion transpiring. It is a sign of the fall which waits upon unbecoming pride and vanity. It is the hieroglyphic of weakness, instability and effeminateness and signifies—in the intellectual world—the exhaustion of the spirit which attempts to penetrate the mystery of God. *In the physical world*: the overthrow of fortunes, and the down fall of empires.

THE SEVENTEENTH KEY: the letter Ph.

The seventeenth key is represented by a flaming star having eight rays which enclose seven other stars hovering over a young nude maiden, who sheds upon the arid earth the fluids of universal life contained within two cups, one of Gold, the other of Silver. Near her is seen a butterfly basking upon a rose. It is the, symbol of Hope, and the hieroglyphic of eternal youth; it is the Heaven of the magi, and the home of the grand initiator of the mysteries of life and death, and signifies—in the intellectual world—the interior light which illuminates the soul. *In the physical world*: hope.

THE EIGHTEENTH KEY: the letter Tsade.

The eighteenth key is represented by a figure of the moon half obscured, brightens into a pale twilight; two winding paths loose themselves in the distant wilderness. In front of one of these paths cowers a wolf, and before the other a dog barking at the moon, and between these two is a craw-fish or crab. It is the hieroglyphic of the moon and lunar influences; it is the symbol of Reflection, and is the emblem of all negative forces and operations. This key shows enchantments by the means of natural magic, and unveils the mysteries of all magnetic substances. *In the intellectual world* it signifies

the obscuration and darkness which enshrouds the soul when it submits itself to the empire of the passions. *In the physical world*, deception and hidden forces.

THE NINETEENTH KEY: the letter Kaph.

The nineteenth key is represented by a figure of the radiant sun, illuminating two little children, who are holding each other by the hand in the midst of a circle formed of beautiful flowers. This is the sign of the sun. It is the hieroglyphic of power and light: the emblem of innocence, and the symbol of that perfect happiness which only comes unto those who are both innocent and pure. It is the sign of the regeneration of man, and signifies—in the intellectual world—sacred truth and purity. *In the physical world*: Peace and happiness.

THE TWENTIETH KEY: the letter Resch.

The twentieth key is represented by the angel of saint John sounding the trumpet of doom, the last day, the resurrection of the dead. Below the angel are the graves of past generations opening and the occupiers thereof rising unto judgment. This is the hieroglyphic of change. It is the philosophic crucible of nature wherein all things are smelted and transformed: it is the emblem of the restless action of chemical forces, and signifies—in the intellectual world—both vegetation and eternal life. *In the physical world*: that which the profane conceive to be miracles.

THE TWENTY-FIRST KEY: the letter Shin.

The twenty-first key is represented by the Kabbalistic crown, formed of golden roses. This crown is circular, and upon the four points of the compass is the head of a man, a bull, a lion, and an eagle; within the center of the crown shines the chief jewel, the pearl of great price: it is the star of Bethlehem, the divine Ego which confers upon the human soul the attribute of immortality. It is the hieroglyphic of the at-one-ment, the sign of completion and victory. It is the omega of the soul's initiation, and the king of the Kosmos. It is the emblem of the Hindu Nirvana, and therefore has no signification but triumph in the intellectual worlds, nor any thing but absolute victory upon the planes of matter.

THE TWENTY-SECOND KEY: the letter Tau.

This is properly speaking an unnumbered key, and is equivalent to the cypher. It is represented by the fool, and is shown by the figure of a blind man carrying a wallet upon his back leaning against a fallen pillar. The wallet shows the faults of mankind; the fallen pillar, the ephemeral nature of all material works. It is the symbol of man who is the slave of matter: it is the sign of ignorance and folly, of man ruled by the animal, and consequently has no signification at all in the realms of the intellect.

NOTE. Those readers who are at all familiar with the Taro will notice that I have not conformed to the usual rule of numbering the two last keys. The crown of the magi given by me as No 21 is, by Eliphas Levi and others, given as No. 22. I can only say by way of explanation that the order adopted by me is the correct one. In the past there has been a greater desire to *mislead* than to *instruct*. The 21st key of the Taro is known by initiates to be the most important of all containing as it does all the rest within itself: as such it is the *polar opposite* of the 22nd key or the fool. T. H. B.

Part 4 of 5: *The Platonist*, Vol. III, No. 12, Dec., 1887

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE FOUR ACES.

The four Aces of the sacred Taro has a four-fold significance and interpretation. Thus they in turn represent—the four cardinal signs of the Celestial Zodiac, the four elements of occultism, the four forms of being which represent the four progressive forms of intelligence, and lastly the four primary concepts of the Deity which are the four modes of conceiving Unity.

The four cardinal signs of the (ancient)⁵ Celestial Zodiac are the constellations now known as Taurus, Aquarius, Leo and Scorpio.

The four elements of Occultism are Earth, Air, Fire and Water. The four forms of being are Man, Eagle, Lion and Bull. The four primary concepts of Deity are the Truth, the Principle, the Law, and the Word.

THE ACE OF DIAMONDS

represents the soul of the world, the universal fluid, and is the grand magical agent in movement. It indicates to us the visible unity in the universal harmonies of nature I. e. providence. It corresponds to the element of Air, the sign Aquarius, man, the truth. It is the final He of the divine word. It is the symbol of Life.

THE ACE OF CLUBS

is the symbol of the scepter of omnipotence. It gives us the Supreme Unity I, and reveals the phallus of the Egyptians. It is creative intelligence, and corresponds to the element of Fire, the sign Leo, the Lion, the Principle. It is the Jod of the Hebrews. It is the symbol of power.

THE ACE OF CUPS (Hearts)

is the symbol of fecundity and in its hieroglyphic presents the horizontal line || — || and gives us the revealed and revealing unity of numbers. It represents the Feminine principle—ISIS, and corresponds to the HE of the Word. It is living intelligence, and is symbolized by the element of Water, the sign Scorpio, the Eagle, the Law (sex). It is the symbol of Love.

THE ACE OF SWORDS (Spades)

of which the hieroglyphic sign re-unites the verticle line with the horizontal, thus —||— and points out to us the living fecundating unity, the Holy Spirit of the Bible, the Vau of the Word. It is militant intelligence and shows completion which corresponds to the element of Earth, the sign Taurus (the Bull), the Word. It is the symbol of affection -

In the above analysis we have expressed the four forms of Unity, the four forms of intelligence, the four forms of the Word, and the four symbols of Life, or motion. That is to say, they are typical conceptions of Unity, Intelligence, the Word and Life, which have been handed down to us from time immemorial, aye, from the very dawn of human existence, and as such they are deserving of close study, presenting as they do the Kabbalistical keys with which the mighty intellects of the first fathers of our race unlocked the mysteries of the kosmos, and stormed the very gates of heaven.

When we seek for realities, we must always penetrate deep below the surface of external appearances. The written letter of any revelation is at best but a very poor medium for the transmission of truth - We have not far to go in order to realize this fact, even in our own day. We use words and attach meanings thereto undreamt of by our ancestors, while many of their terms have not only fallen into disuse but we do not now know what meaning or significance they attached to many of our common words, which are considered vulgar to-day, unless we have recourse to some old dictionary. If this transpires within the short history of our present civilization, and is true regarding words that were once in every day use, how much more so is it when we deal with words and languages which are thousands of years older than ours, and with terms the meanings of which were never explained by the lexicographer, or became the common property of the people. We must therefore be extremely careful in our researches, because the different constructions placed upon the dead letter are especially important when the subject treated upon belongs to the sacred realm of the Occult. Thus, when we speak of the four elements and try to formulate a true conception of them in their outward parts, as Fire, Earth, Air and Water, we are met face to face with the actual fact that not one of them is an element at all, when viewed by the light of chemical science, and consequently we are in danger of charging the old Alchemists with benighted ignorance. When once this takes foothold within us our belief in these pretended powers and wisdom falls at once to the

ground, and we relegate all we cannot explain or understand about them to superstitions and delusions, or what is still worse, direct imposture. There seems upon the external surface very little sense in trying to co-relate the four ancient elements with a Man, a Bull, a Lion and an Eagle, especially when we learn that the Bull represents the inert passive earth. Wherein lies the connection? Thus it will ever be, unless we can penetrate below the plane of external appearances. The Ancients had no more idea of calling the Fire, Earth, Air and Water, actual elements upon the physical plane than the modern chemist has. It is the interior principle that they intended to represent. To them the Bull was the perfect symbol of fecundity and procreation, and our passive earth was considered the grand Matrix of the ever moving spirit. It is the union of both which brings forth life.

It is the interior principles then which must always claim our earnest attention, our chief aim being to realize that which they represent and trace them to their primal sources as divine emanations of the deity.

What we have said concerning the four elements and their actual interpretation, is also true of every card and key of this Kabbalistical Taro.

The ace of diamonds in its esoteric aspect represents manifested spirit, active, moving and creative, evolving its potencies within the Astral Light. It is Air or the Gases.

The ace of clubs in its esoteric aspect represents a still more external state, in the descending scale of creation. It signifies Force, Motion, Light and Heat; in other words, Fire.

The ace of cups in its esoteric aspect represents the entire fluidic properties of nature, in which every thing is resolvable, and as such corresponds to Water.

The ace of spades in its esoteric aspect represents the most external form of the creative design. It is matter per se, and as such is fittingly symbolized by the Earth.

Thus do we commence with Spirit and terminate with Matter, as the lowest point of the Arc, from whence we must retrace our steps and ultimately return into spirit. Herein consists the great mystery resolving all things in to their pure elemental substance. Another turn of this mystic Rota or wheel, and the alchemist will see how to transmute all metals into gold. The secret lies within the few words just stated, and will repay the finder. As a conclusion to this section of the Taro, viz.: the 22 keys and the four aces, we give

the technical verses of Eliphas Levi upon their theological meanings; and the number preceding each line signifies the number of the Key.

- I. All things announce a conscious, active cause,
- II. Vivific Oneness based on number's laws;
- III. Who all containing is by nought confined,
- IV. And all preceding hath no bound assigned.

- V. This only Lord should man adore alone,
- VI. Who doth true doctrine to pure hearts make known.
- VII. But acts of faith require a single chief.
- VIII. Whence we proclaim one altar, law, belief:

- IX. The changeless God will never change their base,
- X. He rules our days and dooms through every phase.
- XI. His mercy's wealth which Vice to nought will bring.
- XII. His people promises a future King.

- XIII. The tomb's a path which to new worlds ascends.
And life through all subsists, death only ends.

- Pure, sacred, steadfast truths we here repeat
The venerated numbers⁶ thus complete.

- XIV. The angel blest doth calm and moderate,
- XV. The evil is the fiend of pride and hate.
- XVI. God doth the lightning and the fire subdue;
- XVII. He rules the dewy eve and evening dew;
- XVIII. The watchful moon He sets to guard our heights
- XIX. His sun's the source of life's renewed delights.
- XX. His breath revivifies the dust of graves
or
- XXI. Where crowds descend who are of lust the slaves;
or The mercy-seat He covers with His crown,
- XXII. And on the cherubs pours His glory down.

The above impressive lines are full of mystic significance when we remember the special Key belonging to each sentence, and they indicate very clearly that Eliphas Levi knew vastly more about the Taro than he cared to commit to writing.

Part 5 of 5: *The Platonist*, Vol. IV, No. 7, July, 1888

THE METHOD OF USING THE TARO.

The first manipulation of *The Taro*, which the student ought to master, is that of "Casting the Horoscope," because until this method of working is rightly understood the hidden, interior sense of the whole system will always remain con-

cealed. In fact it is as well to state at once, that unless the student is prepared to devote both time and earnest thought to the subject he will never be able to perceive the wonderful truths of nature which lie concealed in this sublime philosophical system of the Jewish Kabbalah. Neither can any one, *no matter who he is*, understand the hidden mean-

ing—the spiritual truths of the Kabbalah, until he has mastered the great fundamental laws of the sacred Taro, which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, *alter not*.

The intellectual world may be literally flooded with “Kabbalah Denudatas,” but all to no purpose; the human mind will still remain ignorant and blind to the interior teachings of the Bible and the Kabbalah, until they have mastered the Esoteric principles laid down for their guidance in the sacred Book of Enoch.

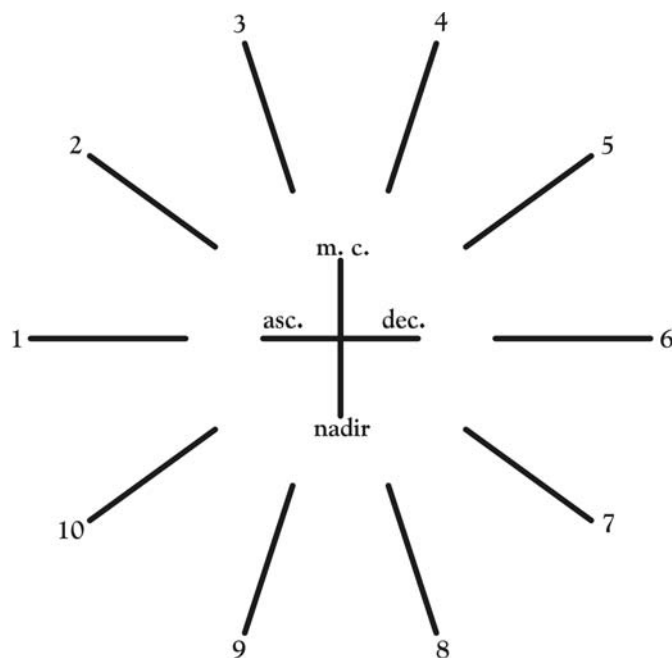
A knowledge of the Taro implies a knowledge of the Kabbalah: in fact they form the two halves of the same system and cannot be separated.

“Casting the Horoscope,” means erecting a Kabbalistical scheme or figure of the ten emanations in the form of the geometrical “Decagon.” This figure may be erected for the solution of any important subject or question, for the revelation of the ultimate results of any weighty undertaking, the future *physical* destiny of the querent,—or, ascending still higher, such a figure may be erected for the solution of Occult problems, if confined to the plane occupied by the querent.

To cast the horoscopic figure, the student requires a good set of Taro cards.⁷ Having obtained these he must next draw out upon a piece of good thick “double elephant” drawing paper a *ten pointed star*, 18 inches in diameter; two points, No. 1 and 6 should form an horizontal line, with four points above and four below thus:—

In the center of the chart is the sacred cross, giving the four cardinal points of the scheme. The chart must be fastened upon the top of a suitable table, or upon a board.

The first process is to separate the pack into three lots, the first containing only the 22 keys, which the student will find numbered respectively from I to XXII. Each of these keys should be neatly marked with its corresponding Hebrew character. The second lot will consist of the four aces; the last lot contains the remainder of the cards. The first and second only (that is the keys and aces) will be used in the present illustration.



The second process is to carefully shuffle⁸ the keys alone, leaving the four aces by themselves. When shuffled, cut them into three lots at random, paying no attention whatever to the equality of the lots into which they are cut. This process of shuffling and cutting is to be repeated three times, *with the will firmly fixed upon the subject*.

The third process is to deal them slowly, one at a time, upon the points of the figure, commencing at No. 1 and going round to No. 10: then repeat this process by commencing at No. 10 and finishing at No. 1 so that the first three cards dealt will be *covered* by the *last* three. There will be two cards left which must be dealt outside the figure, face downwards, side by side.

The fourth process is to shuffle the four aces, and deal them upon the points of the astral cross in the center of the figure. Thus: first deal the ace upon the angle marked *asc.*, which is the ascendant of the Horoscope; second upon the angle marked *m. c.*, “medium coeli,” or Zenith; third deal one upon the angle marked *dec.* or western horizon, and lastly place the remaining ace upon the angle marked *nadir*; or lower meridian, which is the place of the sun at midnight.

The figure or Kabbalistic Horoscope representing the ten mansions of the divine sephiroth is now completed, so far as the mechanical operation is concerned. But, before the figure can be understood, it requires a little explanation. Therefore note well the following:

The first point of the figure constitutes the center of a *trinity*, and governs the numbers at either side, viz.: Nos. 2 and 10. This is termed the first quadrant, which rules the principles of life and vitality connected with the subject under consideration, and the astral key or ace corresponding thereto is situated upon the angle *asc.* The second quadrant is a *duad* and embraces those points numbered 3 and 4. This is the quadrant of Honour, Power, and also of *Motive*, position and reputation of the subject, and the astral key is the ace located upon the angle marked *m. c.*

The sixth point (6) is also the center of a trinity controlling Nos. 5 and 7, which constitute the third quadrant, and the polar opposite of the first. It is the negation of life. It is opposition, discord, death

and failure of all kinds, and under all circumstances. In a feminine question this quadrant becomes masculine, and *vice versa* if the query be masculine.

The fourth and last quadrant is also a duad, and embraces Nos. 8 and 9. It represents the polar opposite of the second. It shows to us the grave, and reveals the ultimates of all things and actions; showing the insignificance of all human greatness upon the physical plane. Symbolically it represents *Oblivion*.

And lastly, the two cards dealt outside the figures are called the staff, which is only consulted when the figure is contradictory and fails to elucidate the point sought. In such a case "*the staff*" points out the cause of such failure, and consequently supports the devoted student ever in his disappointment.

Viewed generally, the horizontal line across the figure from 1 to 6 represents the magic wand of power, No. 1 being the head and No. 6 the feet; the center of the Astral Key being that point of equilibrium where the two are one. This point of equilibrium is the state of true adeptship, from whence we can view the head and the feet of the Macrocosm. Truth is only relative, not absolute. The spiritual world does not contain any more real truth than the material, when viewed solely from its own plane. To obtain truth we must be able to perceive the internal as well as the external; the one is equally as important as the other. The unincarnated seraph is quite as ignorant as the benighted mortal when considered from their respective states. To say that the whole of the physical world is maya or delusion is just as great a mistake as to say that the *Devachanic* Life is absolute truth. *All things are true and real upon their own special planes, and all things are equally illusive when viewed from still higher states.*

The four points above the horizon symbolize the four-fold nature of the higher mysteries, and the same may also be said of the four points below the line; *they represent the external*,—wherein is concealed the hidden treasure.

If the student of this system be deeply in earnest, with a lofty desire to ascertain only *the truth*, and *nothing* but the truth, and is not in any way anxious to receive confirmation of any personal or preconceived opinions, then the answer from the Horoscope will be *clear* and to the point, its interpretation at the moment when the mind and soul become *en rapport* with the mystical hieroglyphics will be *unmistakable*, for this reason: that when the figure is erected with sufficient earnestness of purpose, it not only represents but reveals the subject that is uppermost in the querent's mind during its preparation.⁹

A few general indications are all that can be given in this number of THE PLATONIST regarding the rules for *judging* a figure, when it has been erected. To be of any real service the various laws, principles, and combinations should be dealt with in detail and illustrated with various examples, but such a work would doubtless weary most of the readers, who have probably already heard quite sufficient upon the subject. We will therefore make our conclusion brief.

In questions of living and vitality, if diamonds occupy the astral throne, it is a most potent answer in the affirmative. The various incidents connected with this vitality, etc., may be found as follows: turn the two cards upon No. 1 face upwards, and meditate upon their signification. Especially must the querent beware of loss and trouble, if adverse keys hold this mansion. Then, in turn, proceed the same with No. 2 and No. 10, bearing in mind that No. 1 shows the primary or central cause, while Nos. 2 and 10 reveal all secondary agencies. When this has been duly meditated upon, turn up the ace upon the astral throne of the western angle and the powers it reveals will show all the enemies and oppositions to the question. Likewise the ace upon the angle of the *m. c.* shows what honor the querent will have in life, or otherwise; and, lastly, the astral key upon the *nadir* will, with its accompanying duad, reveal the end of the whole subject.

If, in the same query, the ace of swords falls upon the throne ruling the ascendant it indicates sickness, disease and death. When this happens, the trinity of mansions change and show the *why* and the *wherefore* of this misfortune. And, again, the round of the figure would bear the same mystical relationship.

If the ace of cups be found upon the astral throne of the first quadrant in a query of life, its destiny, etc. it indicates that love, wine and sensuality are latent within and must be guarded against, if its trinity agrees therewith. But, on the contrary, if the trinity contains those keys which are of a scientific or philosophical nature then this *love* will be upon a higher plane, and represent love of mankind, love of country, wisdom, and progressive reforms.

And, lastly, should the ace of clubs occupy the first astral throne, it indicates a solitary, dull, laborious life, the plane of which will be found revealed in the corresponding keys: it may be that of a penniless tramp, or it may be that of the philosophical hermit, or any state between.

There are many other forms and methods of which much might be said, but which we leave until the demand for such knowledge shall be made. ❧

Endnotes

- 1 We must strongly dissent from the opinion of our able contributor concerning the system of Pataujali. The "metaphysical formulas" of the great Hindu Occultist have been of vast benefit to many of the western race.—Ed. of the Platonist.

Endnotes (continued)

- 2 This panoramic picture contained the Involution of spirit and the evolution of matter: Crystallization in its various processes, and the journey and tragedy of the soul around the Zodiac of God, or the Cycle of necessity. T. H. B.
- 3 Our common cards are but imperfect or degenerated sets, derived from the original Taro. Likewise, the Fortune-telling by cards, as practiced by many of the Gypsy tribes, is a relic of the more sublime system under consideration.

The original names for the cards were as follows: Cups, which symbolized the erotic element; the arrow or Javlin, which was an emblem of sorrow, strife, and death; the trefoil, which indicated labor and application—animal strength. It is also singular that the symbol for clubs on our common cards is a trefoil, and reminds the son of Erin of his beloved Shamrock; and, lastly, the Diamonds were symbolized by the Rose, a very significant emblem. T. H. B.
- 4 Special attention should be paid to this symbol, because it represents the highest unit we possess, viz. the number 9. T. H. B.
- 5 It is about 6500 years since the Sun last entered the sign Taurus, and about 4400 years since the Sun *left* this sign,—during this viterol the four signs here mentioned were “the cardinal signs.” It is plain therefore that our Taro has attained a respectable age. T. H. B.
- 6 The number 13 is, Kabbalistically, the sacred number of completion. It signifies the *latent* trinity of the En Soph, and the 10 emanations. It is the Messiah and the Virgin with their 11 *faithful* disciples, and lastly it is the Sun and his 12 starry mansions. T. H. B.
- 7 The Italian cards are the most perfect ones that can be obtained at present and if any reader of THE PLATONIST knows where these cards can be obtained in the U.S.A. a note containing such information addressed in care of the Editor will be esteemed as a personal favor. T. H. B.
- 8 It is well to remark, that *in every case*, either of shuffling or of dealing the cards, they must always be *face downwards*. T. H. B.
- 9 It is a well known fact in Occult science that *Thoughts* assume form: this subjective form will correspond to the symbolic reading of a figure of the Taro, if properly executed. To be truly successful then, it is evident that the operator must allow one thought alone to occupy the mind during the operation. Otherwise, conflicting thoughts will blend and produce a conflicting Horoscope. T. H. B.